81- 0289

10 February 1981   ILLEGIB

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

STAT FROM: [ ]

Chief, Language School

SUBJECT: Language School Briefing With Max Hugel

On 4 February Mr. Max Hugel, Special Assistant to the
STAT DCI, [ ]
and [ ]
Mr. Hugel was briefed on the following points concerning the
Language School:

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2. Production: The Language School trains
approximately [ ] part-time)
students annually in 24 languages. Eighty percent of
the training is dedicated to French, Spanish, German,
Russian, and Chinese. The school conducted over [ ]
tests in the past year; it can test in 30 languages.
The Foreign Service Institute Language School is the
first alternative when we lack the capability to teach
or test a language.

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Full-time and some part-time training is
conducted at Chamber of Commerce building and a large
STAT [ ] part-time program is conducted at
Headquarters. A new part-time program is also in
operation in the Rosslyn area.

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3. Training Method: No single method is imposed
on the instructor staff, but all programs incorporate
the audio-lingual method, total immersion (from 2½ days
to 3 full weeks) and the use of audiotape recorders,
videotapes, films and other supplementary material.
The use of English in the classroom is kept to a
minimum.

Ninety percent of the full-time students are
from the Operations Directorate; therefore, the focus
of training is on the spoken language. Reading and
understanding are acquired in learning to speak but the
level of reading proficiency will vary especially if
the written language is ideographic.

4. Problems:

a. Operations Directorate manpower shortage
results in:

- small classes--average 2.4 students in
full-time classes which is not cost efficient.

- lack of long term planning capability.

- aborted training--the average duration of
training was only two-thirds of the advertised
course length.

b. Classroom space:

Presently unable to conduct a part-time
Arabic class in Headquarters for 16 students
because of lack of space. Other language classes
have been cancelled. Present classroom space at
Chamber of Commerce could not accommodate any
significant increase of students.

c. Recruiting language qualified people:

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Of ☐ career trainees recruited in
1980 only 16 were qualified at the 3 level in
speaking a foreign language. Native speakers
recruited from ethnic populations in this country
are few and far between.

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    d. GS-12 ceiling on language specialists:

        A government wide GS-12 ceiling on
linguists makes those positions less attractive
and creates inequities in compensation for
linguists whose contribution is often as, or more,
important than other categories of personnel who
are not restricted by an arbitrary ceiling.

        e. Unresolved difference with Operations
Directorate over Language School policy of test-
ing general language proficiency which does not
equate to testing the use of the language in job
performance.

5. Help Needed:

    a. Continuing interest and emphasis on
language problems, competence, and training by
the top echelon of the Agency.

    b. Creation of language training complement
to accommodate full-time (over 12 weeks)
language students. A training complement would
enable customer components to use the slots
vacated by the person sent to training. The
Executive Committee approved [   ] positions for
this purpose for FY 1983.

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    c. An increase in Language School assets
(instructor positions, space, budget) to
correspond to any increased requirements.

    d. Affirmation of a liberal Language
Incentive Program which will compensate language
use, achievement, and maintenance. Incentives
introduced in October 1979 are having a
beneficial effect on language competence in the
Agency.

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